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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5334
INFO RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY 0088
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 1173
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0844
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 0624
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
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RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI 5881

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 TRIPOLI 000795

NOFORN SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/MAG AND ISN/CBC (FERGUSON); NSC FOR MCDERMOTT E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/5/2019

TAGS: [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [CWC](#) [OPCW](#) [LY](#)

SUBJECT: LIBYA'S CHEMICAL WEAPONS DESTRUCTION CHIEF DEFENDS EXTENSION REQUEST REF: A) STATE 100809; B) TRIPOLI 490

CLASSIFIED BY: Joan Polaschik, CDA, U.S. Embassy Tripoli, U.S. Department of State. REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

1.(S/NF) Summary: Dr. Ahmed Hesnawy, head of Libya's chemical weapons destruction program, defended Libya's Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) extension request. 2. Except for the alleged grassroots environmental movement, most of Hesnawy's argument seemed plausible. Hesnawy also provided a detailed update on the Rabta conversion program. HESNAWY JUSTIFIES EXTENSION REQUEST

2.(S) During a September 30 meeting, Pol/Econ Chief jointly delivered ref a demarche with French DCM to the head of the chemical weapons destruction program. 3.(S) Hesnawy gave a long explanation of the reasons for the extension request, including resistance from the local community when constructing the Rabta conversion program. 3.(S/NF) Hesnawy then explained that the next problem he confronted was with the "civil defense people," who were concerned about securing the site. 4.(S) On a positive note, Hesnawy reported that the ground at the site has been leveled, fencing and gates have been put in place, and water and electricity are being brought to the site. UPDATE ON SIPSA WORK

5.(S) Hesnawy said that he had met with Italian company SIPSA September 29 (ref B) and emphasized the necessity of building the structure in an environmentally sound manner. 6.(S) Hesnawy explained that a Technical Secretariat (TS) team recently visited the sites and inspected the storage of the mustard gas and precursors. RABTA CONVERSION PROGRAM

7.(S) Regarding the conversion of Rabta 1 and 2 facilities, he explained that the list of equipment submitted in the amendment request had been approved. REQUEST FOR SUPPORT

8.(S) Hesnawy requested U.S. support during the October 12 Executive Council session and in weighing in with European delegations. P/E Chief expressed support. UK EMBASSY WARNS OF HESNAWY'S CONFIDENCE

9.(S) In a separate meeting, xxxxxxxxxxxx told P/E Chief that while the MFA IO officer Tajouri Shiradi had made the same request for support for the extension, Hesnawy's argument was more compelling. 10.(S/NF) Bio info: Hesnawy is a charismatic and gregarious character, who spoke fluent American English. He used American expressions and slang. 11.(S/NF) Comment: The Libyans made an effort to meet with us on short notice and were ready to provide detailed information about the status of the program.